

Former Massachusetts Governor Argeo Paul Cellucci dead at 65 following battle with Lou Gehrig's Disease

June 10, 2013

Former Massachusetts Governor Argeo Paul Cellucci died yesterday following a two-year battle with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, commonly known as Lou Gehrig's Disease.

A Republican, Cellucci served one full term as governor before resigning to accept a position as the U.S. ambassador to Canada under former President George W. Bush.

Prior to his term as governor, Cellucci served in both the Massachusetts House of Representatives and Senate before being elected lieutenant governor in 1991.

'Rock-hard integrity': former Massachusetts Governor Argeo Paul Cellucci died yesterday. He was 65

Cellucci served as lieutenant governor for six years until, in 1997, then-governor William Weld resigned to pursue an ambassadorship to Mexico after being appointed by former President Bill Clinton. Weld was never confirmed for the post.

As governor, Cellucci was a fiscal Conservative while remaining somewhat middle-of-the-road on social issues.

In 2001, the Libertarian-leaning Cato Institute gave Cellucci an 'A' rating as governor, noting that he 'earned the distinction of having the best record of reducing taxes and restraining spending growth' amongst the nation's 50 governors.

Cellucci supported Roe V. Wade, which often found him at odds with the Catholic Church - while lieutenant governor, Cardinal Bernard Law cited his position on the controversial abortion law when he uninvited him to speak at Hudson Catholic High Schol, his alma mater.

Despite being a Republican, Cellucci signed into law one of the strictest gun bills in the nation.

Cellucci oversaw part of the controversial 'Big Dig' project in Boston, which, at an estimated \$22 billion, is the most expensive highway project in U.S. history and resulted in one death, multiple criminal arrests and nearly \$500 million in restitution from the project's consortium and other companies involved in its construction.

Big Disappointment: Cellucci oversaw Boston's controversial 'Big Dig,' the most expensive highway project in U.S. history

In 2003, while serving as ambassador to Canada, Cellucci criticized Canadian opposition to the war in Iraq, saying that the U.S. would 'never hesitate' to support Canada if it faced a security threat. The comments were front-page news in Canada, and prompted Canadian columnist Mel Hurtig to charge Cellucci with being 'ill-mannered, obnoxious [and] arrogant.'

Upon hearing of his death, Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick issued a statement saying 'Massachusetts lost a favored son and devoted public servant today. A lawyer, legislator, governor and diplomat, Paul Cellucci was also a kind man and a friend.'

Former Governor Weld also issued a statement about his former lieutenant governor.

'Paul Cellucci was simply one of the finest human beings I have ever met. I happened to know him in the realm of politics and government, but anyone who knew him in any other arena would have found the same man: a person of rock-hard integrity, keen intelligence, considerable humor, abundant compassion, and deep devotion to family and country. We are all immensely impoverished by his loss,' Weld said.

Former Massachusetts Governor and 2012 presidential candidate Mitt Romney took to Twitter to offer his condolences.

'Ann and I are saddened by the loss of our friend Gov. Paul Cellucci. Our hearts and prayers are with Jan and the Cellucci family,' Romney tweeted.